REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The claims are 1-4. Claim 1 has been amended to better define the invention. Support for the claims may be found, *inter alia*, in the disclosure at pages 3-4 and FIG. 1. Reconsideration is expressly requested.

Claims 1-4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Tennby et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,471,804* in view of *Shimizu et al. EP 0 818 188* and in further view of *Inselmann U.S. Patent No. 5,261,997* for the reasons set forth on pages 2-3 of the Office Action.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As set forth in claim 1, as amended, Applicant's invention provides a method for affixing a reusable fastener that consists of a fastener tape and a fastener strip to a baby diaper. Strips that consist of a carrier and a material laminated on to it having fastener elements in the form of loops or hooks are attached to the baby diaper without adhesive. The strips are

basted on and merely fixed in place by means of local melting and flow processes in a first method step, by means of thermobonding or ultrasound bonding, and firmly bonded to the counter-surface in a second method step, by means of cold pressing in a spatially separate workstation.

As indicated in the paragraph bridging paragraphs 3-4 of the disclosure, in the first method step the materials to be connected are merely fixed in place in place by means of local melting and flow processes:

> "By means of local melting and flow processes, the materials to be bonded are merely fixed in place in a first method step."

Basting therefore merely serves to prevent slipping during transport and further processing. A functionally appropriate connection between the strip and the diaper, which can withstand stress, is not produced in the first method step. Because only slight local basting is carried out, the first method step can be carried out at high speed.

A firm connection is produced only subsequently, in the second method step, by means of cold pressing. As indicated in FIG. 1 of Applicant's disclosure, cold pressing takes place in a second, spatially separate work station. For this purpose according to the exemplary embodiment shown in FIG. 1, the materials to be connected are passed through a roller nip and cold-pressed to one another by means of the effect of great forces.

The novelty of the method as recited in claim 1 as amended has not been challenged by the Examiner and indeed is beyond doubt; however, contrary to the Examiner's position, it is respectfully submitted that the method is also nonobvious over the cited art.

The primary reference to *Tennby et al.* describes a method and a device for attaching material strips to a continuous web. For this purpose, *Tennby et al.* first connects the material strips 2 with the web 4 only at a first end 15, using a first ultrasound horn 17. See column 4, lines 17 to 19 of *Tennby et al.* The web 4 and the strip 2 are subsequently passed to a second ultrasound horn 18, and there they are connected over

their full area by means of ultrasound bonding. See column 4, lines 39 to 48, and column 5, lines 9 to 20 of *Tennby et al.*

Therefore, according to *Tennby et al.*, a complicated double ultrasound bonding process is proposed. In particular, here the connection over the full area takes place by means of ultrasound bonding, so that the disadvantage of slow process management that is discussed in Applicant's disclosure in the paragraph bridging pages 2-3 results:

> "Ultrasound bonding as well as bonding by means of heat and pressure are relatively slow attachment methods."

The defects and deficiencies of the primary reference to *Tennby et al.* are nowhere remedied by the secondary references to *Shimizu et al.* and *Inselmann. Shimizu et al.* was cited by the Examiner merely with regard to the configuration of a diaper having a hook closure tape. According to *Shimizu et al.*, the closure strip is usually intended to be attached by means of a hot-gluing method. Furthermore, *Shimizu et al.* also describes that thermobonding or ultrasound bonding can be used as an alternative. During this single method step of *Shimizu et al.*, a

firm connection is supposed to be produced, so that here again, the production speed is limited.

Inselmann relates to an indexing device for connecting textile materials. For this purpose, the textile materials 20 are deposited onto a support disk 23 in a removal region 27, and when the support disk 23 rotates, they are covered by a cover disk 26 that is raised in the removal region 27. By means of a further rotation, the textile material 20 is passed to a hot-pressing device 28. In this connection, the hot-pressing device 28 includes a cushion to which compressed air can be applied, in order to press the textile material 20 against a fixed, heated counter-plate 46 over its full area. See column 4, line 64 to column 5, line 8 of *Inselmann*.

During this hot-pressing process, the textile materials 20 are constantly disposed between the support disk 23 and the cover disk 26. Because of the configuration of the device as described in *Inselmann*, hot pressing of the textile material 20 over its full area always takes place, whereby the individual layers are connected with one another over their full area. A cold-pressing station 63 can be provided merely as an option. The precise

purpose of the cold-pressing station 63 is not described by *Inselmann*. Going along with the Examiner's interpretation set forth at page 3 of the Office Action, the cold-pressing station of *Inselmann* serves to cool the material that was previously pressed over its full area in the hot-pressing station. Thus, cold pressing is provided in *Inselmann* merely to accelerate the full-area hot pressing that was carried out previously, which is not a separate method step in which a firm connection is produced by means of cold pressing. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that there is no agreement in *Inselmann* with the second method step of Applicant's method as recited in amended claim 1.

All of the cited references are directed at methods in which a full-area connection of textile materials takes place by means of thermobonding or ultrasound bonding. It is not suggested in any of the cited references to produce a full-area connection by means of cold pressing, after only slight basting. It is respectfully submitted that even *Inselmann* cannot make such a method obvious, taking the other prior art into consideration, because there, too, the full-area connection takes place by means of thermobonding, and a cold-pressing station is merely provided to complete the hot-pressing method. In this connection, it

should also be pointed out that according to Applicant's method as recited in amended claim 1, the strips are basted on in a first method step, in order to keep them in position, which can be achieved only if the locally melted regions have solidified again before the first method step has ended. According to Applicant's method as recited in amended claim 1, cold pressing is then provided as an independent, separate method step, in order to achieve a full-area connection.

It is respectfully submitted that this method, having two independent method steps apart from one another, to a great extent, whereby a firm connection takes place only in a second method step, by means of cold pressing, is nowhere disclosed or suggested by the prior art. Thus, even if one were to combine the prior art as suggested by the Examiner, one would still not achieve Applicant's method as recited in claim 1 as amended. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that amended claim 1, together with claims 2-4, which depend directly or indirectly thereon, are patentable over the cited references.

In summary, claim 1 has been amended. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the claims be allowed and that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,
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